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## COOK'S PLACE IN NORTHWEST HISTORY.\*

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One year ago the Pacific Northwest celebrated by an exposition the centennial of the expedition of Lewis and Clark. In the Northwest the spirit for celebrating is of recent date, yet that alone is not sufficient for the selection of Lewis and Clark as the objects of celebration. In 1878 the Northwest was no doubt still too young, and the date too near the origin of the World's Fair idea to celebrate the centennial of Cook's voyage; in 1885 they were too much excited by recent railroad development to be interested in the centennial of the coming of the first trading vessel to the Coast; and in 1892 Washington was too new a state and Idaho too new a territory for Old Oregon to attract the world's or even the local attention from the Chicago Fair to the centennial of Vancouver. Yet one year after the World's Fair at St. Louis, the Northwest celebrated in honor of Lewis and Clark. The greater part of the reason for the celebration of this event must be sought in the East.

The celebrators were pioneers and sons of pioneers from the Eastern States, imbued with the feelings of America and proud of the national heroes, especially those heroes who touched their adopted homes. Lewis and Clark were heroes; their published "Travels" were scattered broadcast over the country—an incentive to the dreams of pioneer youth, and a solace to those who were building the Old Northwest or trailing the Wilderness Road. Those men and women who followed the Oregon trail and laid the basis of the life in the new Northwest were dominatingly from those states along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers; the second generation of those states which had been peopled by the economic effects of the war of 1812—that westward movement over the Alleghany mountains, accelerated by the "Travels" of Lewis and Clark appearing in the year that saw the end of the war. In such an energetic westward-moving age, Lewis and Clark—the first Americans to cross the continent—easily became heroes. But behind this Charinism lies the fact that McKenzie had crossed the same continent at its greater breadth some thirteen years before; and that for more than forty years the trappers and traders were pushing up the Missouri;

\*Prepared for the Portland meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association, 30 November and 1 December, 1906.

and sixty years had passed since the Rockies themselves had been sighted. The names given by Lewis and Clark have practically all passed away; their scientific knowledge still stands a monument in the development of the new country—but their popularity hardly rests on these. Of greater importance is their effect on the trade movement of the time. Their preparation accelerated the activity of the Northwest Fur Company of Montreal and led it later to the Coast; their return set in motion Astor and his Pacific Fur Company, and led, by water and land, to the first American settlement on the Coast. In both these cases Lewis and Clark only accelerated already existing movements; the Northwest Company had originated and expanded westward out of rivalry to the Hudson Bay Company; Astor's overland fur trading was but the culmination of the old French movement up the Missouri River. The westward movement and spirit of the Louisiana purchase in the days of Lewis and Clark; the westward movement, the opening of the ginseng and fur trade with China, and the beginning of the whale fishing after the second war with England gave the social canvas on which the deeds of Lewis and Clark were painted in glowing colors. Aside from the romantic popularity they had tangible effects in trade, in both Canada and America. The romantic popularity brought no settlers to Oregon; the Americans who did visit by water or by land came for fur. The tangible effect of the expedition was fur in some of its forms.

Yet here again Lewis and Clark are neither originators or culminators: Cook begins and the Hudson Bay Company ends.

The foregoing has already hinted at the part played by fur in the Northwest lands. It is Cook's place in it that is the problem of this paper.

The term "Northwest" on the Pacific meant among the traders in the earliest day the coast from Nootka and the Columbia northward to the Russian settlements; later it became synonymous with the Oregon Territory—the coast between  $42^{\circ}$  and  $54^{\circ}$   $40'$ ; with the settlement of the Oregon question the term "Pacific Northwest" designated the American portion, while the Canadians projected their term to the Alaskan border. In Cook's day these distinctions were not made, so in this paper close lines have not been drawn, yet the American side for the most part has been followed. The Northwest, then, at first was international trading-ground; it was divided between England and America and divided again into states; it was the source of ware

for trade in China; its frontage and its source of trade on the Pacific binds it in vital relations to this great ocean; and through the trade and politics of the various nations thereon, the Northwest assumes the dignity of a position in the world history. In these various relations—states, the Northwest, the United States, the Pacific and the world—Cook assumes his relations and his place.

It is in his last voyage that Captain Cook touches the Northwest—the last of those voyages which began as a result of the spirit of the early eighteenth century wars. To know the world beyond Europe, which France was losing and England was gaining, and in which all Europe began to be interested, Cook, as an Englishman of his day, commenced his voyages around the world. He opened to the eyes of the Western world the waters and the lands of the South Sea and hunted for the Northwest Passage sought by his countryman Drake two centuries before him. From the Hawaiian Islands he sailed in his last voyage for the New Albion of Drake, bearing instructions to survey its coasts from  $45^{\circ}$  to  $65^{\circ}$  and discover the western entrance of the Northwest Passage. He sighted land on the present Oregon coast, and left the names Foulweather, Perpetua and Gregory on the capes before him; setting to sea, he sighted land again, slightly south of a point which he named Cape Flattery. To sea again, he touched land not many miles further north at a sound to which he gave an English designation, but later retained the Indian name of Nootka. Here he remained nearly a month studying the land, the flora, and fauna; the Indians in their different aspects, and traded with them for furs. He passed northward, touching here and there, naming points, islands and bays, taking latitude and longitude, meeting with the Indians and securing furs from them. He looked for designated Spanish points and further north found traces of the Russians. He left the coast for Hawaii, where he lost his life; his fleet, under the command of Lieutenant King, proceeded to the Asiatic coast, touching, among other places, Kamtschatka and Canton. At the former place they learned of the Russian interest in furs, and at the latter they learned the value of these furs in China and the possible great profit accruing from direct trade between the Northwest and the Middle Kingdom. Within one year after the publication of the "Voyage 'Round the World" the first trader appeared on the Coast from Macao, and a company had been formed in England for this recommended trade.

The results of the voyage are threefold—scientific, nautical and the discovery of the fur; the effects also are threefold—the fur trade, the Chinook jargon, and the political questions arising out of the trade. By scientific result is meant the knowledge gained of geography; the climate, the flora, the fauna; the Indians, their language, their religion, and customs. By nautical is meant that practical knowledge of use to the navigator. The questions of fur, fur trade, the jargon, and the political relations are in themselves explicative. In applying these results and effects to the Northwest history and its various relations an approximate estimate of the place of Cook's voyage may be ascertained.

As to science: Through the knowledge of the geography, Indians, the flora and fauna in Nootka Sound, he touched the early Oregon Territory, and only indirectly the American Northwest through the similarity of these matters in contiguous lands. This was the first published knowledge of this kind regarding this locality and still stands as the beginning of the uncovering of a new land and people. In the relationship of the Northwest to the Pacific and the world he holds a much more important position, in closing the long problem of the segregation of the American and Asiatic continents. Columbus, until his last voyage, felt that he had touched Asiatic islands; de Leon searched for the Fountain of Youth and Coronado for the Cities of Cibola, both pictured by Mandeville in Southwestern Asia. Magellan, Drake and Gila separated the southern ends of these continents and projected their union far to the northward. The legendary Straits of Anian of the sixteenth century were finally proven by Behring in the eighteenth. Cook then closed the problem in giving the distances between the continents, and the vastness of the Pacific. He closes the problem which Columbus began.

As to navigation: Cook's observations of longitude and latitude were the most accurate up to his day. The chronometer was not yet a decade old when he introduced it into the Pacific; and thereby his observations of longitude were especially accurate. His survey of the Coast where sighted, of Nootka and Prince William Sounds and Cook's Inlet were of such accuracy as to be of great practical use to the navigators piloting the fur traders in the succeeding decades; and Nootka Sound in fact became from the first the rendezvous and general port on the Northwest Coast until at the end of the controversy with Spain

it was superceeded by the Columbia River. The names of Foulweather, Perpetua and Flattery are permanent on the maps of Oregon and Washington—the first permanent names given by Europeans. In the relation of the Northwest to the Pacific and to the world he gave it its relative position on the ocean, and by the publication of his "Voyage" made it easy of access so soon as occasion should demand its visitation. In all these questions of navigation, Cook left nothing of permanence except three names on the Oregon and Washington coasts. His surveys were later superceeded and enlarged. His place here is that of the pioneer explorer.

Regarding the fur question, it is necessary to consider its dual nature of location and trade. By his trade and that of his sailors, Cook secured commercial evidence of the fur-bearing animals' presence on the whole Coast from Nootka northward; by this same means and by his intercourse with the Indians he learned of the different kinds of fur animals. The fox and the sea-otter, the bear and the marten, the wolf and the hare, he mentions most frequently. Geographically this is within the Old Oregon Territory; and historico-geographically it is also within the American Pacific Northwest. It is at Kamtschatka and Canton, however, where the remainder of this work is done. At these places Cook's men learned the value of the furs they had secured out of curiosity and had used as rugs on deck and as covering in their cabins. For these half wornout furs such great prices were paid, as it seemed to them, that a mutiny was with difficulty avoided preventing their return to the American coast in order to make their fortunes. In Canton they received less than in Kamtschatka for furs to be used by the Chinese in the North China trade; the Russians being nearer this trade could offer more for the reason that they were also nearer the Kurile and Aleutian Islands where they found in decreasing number the sea-otter which the Chinese held in high esteem. Moreover, in the words of Lieutenant King, these highly-prized sea-otter "are exactly the same we met with at Nootka Sound, which have already been fully described, and where they are in great plenty." At the close, King recommended fur trade directly between America and China, and gave many suggestions as to its conduct. On the basis of these facts and suggestions the first trading vessel in the Northwest waters made its appearance within one year of the publication of the "Voyage 'Round the World"; and a company was formed in England to carry on the trade.

Cook, however, was not the first to learn of the fur animals in America or to trade in furs with China. This honor belongs to the Russians. Some of the sailors of Behring's last voyage learned of the presence of the animals in America and their value in China; in fact, two years before the arrival of Cook a trade was already in existence in the islands and on the coast of America. Yet the Russian fur trade from Siberia to China reaches back to the very beginning of the century. Again, the presence of these Russians in the northern waters was known to Cook; and their discovery of furs in these waters was known to the world by the publication of Behring's voyages in German, English and French, twenty years before Cook began his voyage. In this regard Cook's part is not in the first discovery of the fur and the possible trade, but in making it generally known to the Western world; and in directing trade immediately between America and China, instead of, as with the Russians, the coast trade along the northern islands and lands. Russia held this as a national possession; Cook gave it to the world and opened the trade to the nations.

Again, Cook's high place is endangered by the Hudson Bay Company in its westward movement overland; accelerated by the results of the Seven Years' War, and by the activity of the Northwest Company beginning the year of the publication of the "Voyage." Russians had already found the fur; it was but a question of time until the Canadians, and even the trappers on the Missouri, would have found what Cook found. His place, then, is not an indispensable one; his importance is in the internationality given to his knowledge; and the readiness of Europe and America to begin this trade places him at its starting point.

The discovery of fur and the possibility of its trade brought the United States first into contact with the Northwest. Ginseng was too scarce in America to sustain a trade with China; aside from it the Americans had nothing within the Chinese demand. The Northwest now opened a new field. The coming of Kendrick and Gray, and the discovery of the Columbia, and the later coming of Astor's Pacific Fur Company and the founding of Astoria laid the basis of the political questions down to the settlement of the San Juan Controversy. For China, Cook's voyage opened a whole eastern broadside against her isolation. The Russian fur trade since the days of the Nertschinsk treaty and the English trade since the inheritance of India had now been increased by the renewed activity of the English and the addition of the

Americans. With this trade begins the opening of the Northern Pacific. The Russians had coasted its northern shores and islands and in due course would, no doubt, have made it another Baltic; until the coming of Cook in his three voyages, Spain dominated the South Sea excepting where the Dutch dominated in the East Indies. Following Cook's last voyage came English, Americans, French, Dutch-Austrians, and the renewed entrance of Spanish and Russians. Moreover, into this new center of trade, opened by Cook to the world to meet the world's demand for furs, Cook's voyage incited the western movement of the Hudson Bay Company, the early growth of the Northwest Company and its more rapid progress to the Coast, and also the free trappers via the Missouri. In this latter movement into the Northwest via the Missouri Lewis and Clark find their place at a later day. Cook, then, was not the first discoverer; his place is that of the opener of the Northwest, and with the world's readiness to enter, the beginner of its real history.

Out of the trade on the Coast grew the Chinook jargon; its first steps are noted at Nootka, but its real growth and development are seen at the new trade center on the Columbia. Its prime service was in the barter between the Indians and the whites, but later it became and continues still an intertribal language. Cook took no part either in its origin or its development; but does touch it indirectly in directing to the Northwest Coast those traders by sea who did give it origin, and the Canadians by land who developed it.

Into political relations it is through the fur trade that the Northwest enters. Fur brought the English traders and through them arose the political interests on the Coast. The presence of these traders roused the Spanish to tardy action to hold in check the English and also the Russians further north. The clash occurred at Nootka and the Northwest was hurled into the world history; for this clash was heard as far as the Falkland Islands and the National Assembly of the French Revolution. It was fur that brought Gray to the Columbia and Astor to Astoria and helped in the creation of the Lewis and Clark expedition; and on these America based her relations with Spain and her half-century struggle with England over Oregon. In this struggle for the Northwest, Cook occupies no indispensable place even indirectly. The Russians were there and moving southward before his arrival, and it was their presence which primarily brought Perez to the north—a clash was inevitable. The Eng-



lish-Canadian fur companies were moving westward along the line of Hudson Bay and Lake Superior, while the Americans were ascending the Missouri Valley. Both these movements would overlap on the still undefined border between Canada and the Louisiana Purchase, while west of the Rockies the river systems would bring them into conflict between the Fraser and the Columbia; and each of these in turn with the Russian and Spanish interests to the north and south respectively—again, inevitably clashes. Again in another sense the tendencies were already in existence for a clash in the Northwest some time, whether through fur trade or through slower expansion. Since Columbus' day seven European powers had struggled over the possession of America, north and south; from the Line of Demarcation to the end of the so-called Colonial Wars this conflict had been too intense for us to feel that the Northwest could have escaped this international warfare. These clashes were inevitable; they did come through the fur trade—and Cook's place in them is that he occasioned this fur trade.

In the relation of the Northwest to China and the long train of consequent political events for the latter, we note the same part played by the fur trade—and there again Cook enters.

In the political relations of the Northwest to the Pacific it is the fur trade of the former that makes the unknown sea an international ocean. Until the days of Cook the South Sea had been for the most part a Spanish sea between her possessions in the Americas and the Eastern Islands; but with the opening of the fur trade it merges into the internationality of the northern waters to the extent that within a generation even the name "South Sea" is lost in the greater Pacific. Up to this time what international interest in the Pacific did exist had been centered on its Asiatic shore—the East Indies and China; it is the Northwest that makes it international, and centers the first international interest and conflict on its American shores—and here again Cook's place is seen.

In the political relations of the Northwest to the world it is the fur trade again that bears the burden. It is the Northwest which makes the Pacific a part of the great European international Atlantic; and when the Northwest and its fur trade had played their part other interests succeeded to make the Pacific the new Atlantic and to reduce the Atlantic to the position of a new Mediterranean. Europe is now bounded on the west by the Pacific Coast; the shortest and quickest way between

Europe and Asia is now via the Pacific, and the old sixteenth century problem of cutting the Isthmian canal has resolved itself into a question of giving the Atlantic Ocean an outlet into the Pacific. The Northwest is a link in this long chain of events reaching from the international Mediterranean of the fifteenth century to the international Pacific of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—and Cook's place is again seen. In one other aspect the Northwest plays a world part. From time immemorial to the days of Cook the borderland between Europe and Asia has been on the east Mediterranean and Aegean coasts, and later along the variable political and cultural lines between Russia and Asia. With the entrance of the Northwest fur trade Europe began to see Asia on her west; and as this fur trade culminated in the opening of Japan, Asia began to see Europe in the east. A new border between the two arose in the Pacific; politically it is now on the Asiatic side, in the Territories and Spheres of Influence of the European nations; culturally it is on both shores—in the Boxer movement on the one side and the Asiatic Exclusion Movement on the other. In the development of this new Europe-Asia border the Northwest played its part—and Cook's place is again evident.

In taking a general view of Cook one notes that in the Northwest he leaves the first permanent names and selects the port for the early traders; that he is the scientific pioneer, the harbinger of the fur animal and the inciter of the fur trade. Because of the fur trade in itself and its resultant interests in politics and culture, his highest place is in discovering the fur in the Northwest, and making it generally known at a time when the world was ready to receive it. Here he occupies a vivid and distinct place in many respects, in the economic and political history of the Northwest; in China and the East; in the great political disturbances over Nootka, Oregon and the San Juan Islands; in making the Pacific into an international ocean and the new Mediterranean Sea; and lastly in the creation of the antipodal borderland between Europe and Asia. Cook's place is not an indispensable one—in the sense of the indispensibility of the preaching of St. Paul, the crowning of Charlemagne, and the Norman Conquest. The tendencies and movements were already actively directed toward accomplishing in some way or other what he accomplished. His place is somewhat like that of Columbus for the New World; he actively opened the Northwest to the world and bid the nations enter.

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